



SAFE PASSAGE



A Newsletter for the Humanitarian Mine Action and Small Arms/Light Weapons Communities

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High School Students Learn about Landmines

by William Schlossberg, PM/WRA



South Plantation High School students integrating mine action and language arts (above and below, at right).

The following essay was written by Jason Findley, a ninth grade student at South Plantation High School in Plantation, Florida. Jason and his fellow high school freshmen are part of South Plantation's VALOR (Visionary Academics Leadership Opportunity Respect) Academy, directed by Ms. Donna Rose. Each year, Ms. Rose aims to expose the students to issues and opportunities in the world outside of Plantation.

This past spring semester, the theme was "The Effects of Conflict on Children," and one of the weeks was devoted to the effects of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Jim Lawrence, Acting Director, and Stacy Davis of the Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, traveled to South Plantation High School, along with colleagues from the Department of Defense's Humanitarian Demining Training Center, Marshall Legacy Institute, and Humpty Dumpty Institute, to support the awareness week and educate the students.

The program was multi-disciplinary, incorporating all of the academic subject area teachers. Ms. Bethany Gatewood, Language Arts, had her class write essays and poems about what they learned. Here is an excerpt from one of the essays:

Landmines come in all shapes and sizes. I found this out from spokespeople and veterans who spoke to us. Landmines don't just kill and maim innocent people, they affect their lives. For ex-

ample, a former Marine came to South [South Plantation High School] and touched on how people can't go certain places because these "hidden soldiers" [landmines] were out there. He said that people in these war-torn countries in villages starve because of lack of crops from mine explosions. Also, villagers in Cambodia, Africa and other developing countries all share the same suffering because many families have a relative that is missing a limb or have a father that died and they worry about what to do.

That made me feel thankful for what I have. It matured me more in a way, because there is no point [in] whining about things you want or need when there is some toddler in a third world country that has no arms because of his curiosity in a grassy field. Landmines are just pure torture to people that encounter them. The most surprising fact I've learned from speeches is that there are mines scattered in scores of countries. Even though there aren't any landmines in the U.S. that is too much for the population of the world to worry about. I hope one day I could be a humanitarian and help out in Africa and other non-thriving countries. For example, I could provide food, money and protection from landmine explosions or anything else to help out.

My last thoughts about the landmine situation and remnants of war are that [combatants] are destroying our earth, our home, from a peaceful place to live. If people could understand that, the world would be a better place.

by Jason Findley, 9th Grade
South Plantation High School



PHOTOS COURTESY OF C. BETHANY GATEWOOD

Post-Clearance Land Use Study Huambo Province, Angola

by Kurt Chesko, The HALO Trust

The HALO Trust has been clearing minefields in Angola since 1994, operating in the provinces of Benguela, Huambo, Bié and Kuando Kubango. HALO has been a member of the Public-Private Partnership program in the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) in the Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs since 2001 and has received over \$19 million in grants from PM/WRA for conventional weapons destruction projects in Angola, among other mine-affected countries. In January, HALO conducted its first study to determine the impact of its humanitarian landmine clearance activities on selected mine-affected populations. On March 16 HALO released a report, *Post-Clearance Land Use Study*, which indicates that HALO's clearance operations are having a positive impact on the mine-affected populations in Huambo Province, with an average of 31 families benefitting per hectare of cleared land, the vast majority of which has returned to productive use, primarily for agriculture.

Over the past 15 years, HALO has destroyed 61,900 landmines, 71,000 pieces of unexploded munitions and 77,000 items of stray ammunition in Angola, safely returning over 11,300,000 square meters of cleared land to local communities. While HALO conducts impact assessments *before* a minefield is selected for clearance, until this year, it had not formally investigated the overall impact of its humanitarian landmine clearance projects on Angola's mine-affected populations.

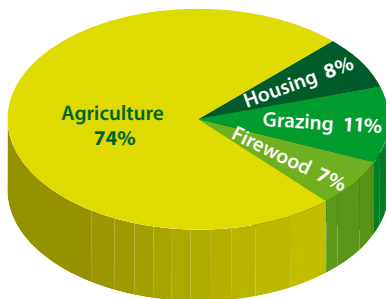
The January study was conducted using a random sample of 30 completed clearance tasks in the Huambo Province. A completed clearance task is a piece of land that was initially unsafe for civilians due to landmines and/or unexploded ordnance, however, because of HALO's demining efforts, this piece of land has now been returned to local populations. Information from completed clearance tasks was garnered by survey teams who travelled to these areas to ask questions about post-clearance land use and economic and other benefits experienced by the community.

Based on interviews with beneficiaries, HALO found that 90 percent of the 30 HALO-cleared minefields have been put into productive use, and are shown in the figures at right.

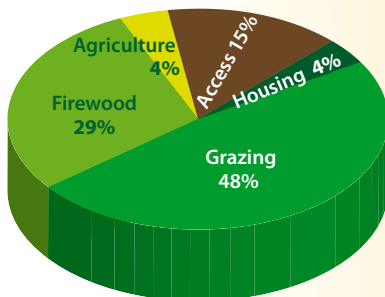
Of these HALO-cleared fields, 78 percent are now being used for farming. Livestock grazing was the second most common post-clearance activity, followed by firewood collection and access to other areas within the local community.

Of the 21 cleared minefields now used for agriculture, 81 percent are being used to sell a portion or more of the crops to local markets, opening up new economic opportunities for area residents. Maize, beans, and

Land Use Type — Primary



Land Use Type — Secondary



PHOTOS BY THE HALO TRUST

The photos above show agricultural land in use by local beneficiaries following HALO clearance in Huambo province.

potatoes are the most common crops sold. The beneficiaries of the cleared land have also found greater availability of firewood, and gained access to additional land for grazing and housing as well as other areas.

HALO discovered that, on average, it took about 16 months for the land to be cleared and returned to productive use. Notably, the study also found that areas previously identified by HALO as *high impact* (most urgently requiring humanitarian landmine clearance), were typically returned to use by the community within six months following completion of clearance. According to HALO's study, 10 to 330 Angolan families benefitted from each of HALO's clearance tasks—an average of 60 families per mine clearance project. The wide range of results reflects the large variations in task area. The study divided beneficiaries into two categories: *direct* (those families actively farming the cleared land) and *indirect* (those families using the cleared land for access to their own plot of land or housing). The average number of direct beneficiaries per completed clearance task was 48 families (range of 8 to 300), and the average number of indirect beneficiaries was 12 families (range of 0 to 30). The average size of area cleared in the sample was 19,326 square meters, thus the average number of beneficiaries per hectare of cleared land was 31 families (25 direct and 6 indirect beneficiaries).

"Post-Clearance Land Use Study," continued on page 3

South East Europe Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction Workshop

by Dave Diaz, PM/WRA, Laurie Freeman, PM/WRA, and Daniele Ressler, CISR/JMU

Southeast Europe has emerged from a history of conflict and now faces significant security and humanitarian challenges from excess, unstable and loosely secured conventional weapons and munitions. In recent years, explosions of ammunition stockpiles in Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia, which caused considerable damage, killed scores of civilians and displaced hundreds more, illustrating the pressing need for action. To promote solutions for these issues, the first South East Europe (SEE) Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction (RASR) workshop was held May 5–7 in Zagreb, Croatia.

This SEE RASR workshop was the first in a series of regional workshops developed to initiate coordination regarding national and regional plans for stockpile reduction and management. This concept emerged from the Adriatic Charter's September 2008 Chiefs of Defense Conference, when officials recognized that a regional approach might improve efficiency and extend limited resources to address the dual threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion.

The first day of the Zagreb workshop focused on threats and responses in the region. The U.S. Ambassador to Croatia, Robert Bradtke, opened the workshop, noting that a coordinated regional approach to stockpile reduction is crucial and requires three things: addressing the threat proactively before a problem occurs, finding ways to become more efficient, and being committed to regional cooperation by approaching stockpile reduction as a threat affecting the whole region. The day concluded with a panel of speakers from the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA) and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency, who summarized existing efforts, guidelines and best practices related to the reduction and "right sizing" of stockpiles.

Jim Lawrence, PM/WRA Acting Director, noted that the RASR workshop aims to bring together practitioners dealing with small-arms stockpile and reduction issues in order to focus on real, practical matters and case studies, share information and reduce the threat of excess stocks.

To support this goal, participants broke into small working groups to talk about realistic options and opportunities for regional cooperation related to stockpile reduction and safety. During these working groups, participants identified priority issues where the RASR can facilitate greater coordination in conventional weapons reduction.

Regional workshops are one aspect of the RASR Initiative, which will develop various coordination mechanisms for governments in the region. The workshops will be held periodically for relevant government officials to share information, advice, and lessons learned, as well as coordinate efforts when and where appropriate. Another RASR workshop is planned this fall. For more information and announcements, visit <http://www.rasrinitiative.org>.

* This article was excerpted from Issue 13.1 of *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*. Reprinted with permission. To read the full article, "First Workshop on Regional Approaches to Stockpile Reduction in Southeast Europe," see <http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/13.1/notes/ressler/ressler.htm>.

"Post-Clearance Land Use Study," continued from page 2

The *Post-Clearance Land Use Study* in Huambo Province indicates that HALO's clearance operations are having a positive impact on the mine-affected populations of Angola. For a copy of the full report, please contact HALO USA at mail@halousa.org.

Meet our New Fellows and Interns

The Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) has been enriched this season by a fresh crop of young scholars from across the United States, bringing new perspectives and youthful energy to the effort to address small arms and light weapons and explosive remnants of war in post-conflict societies.

- ▶ **Laurie Freeman** is a Presidential Management Fellow in the Policy section of PM/WRA, and has embarked on her first rotation to the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a, Yemen. She has a Master's Degree in Public Affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. Prior to joining the State Department, she was the Associate for Mexico and Security Policy at the Washington Office on Latin America, a researcher for the *Washington Post's* Mexico Bureau, and the International Affairs Associate at a human-rights organization based in Mexico City.
- ▶ **Lindsay Gardner** has been with PM/WRA since February as a participant in the Student Temporary Employment Program. She received her Master's Degree in International Terrorism Studies from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. At PM/WRA she supports the policy team on MANPADS counter-proliferation and small arms and light weapons destruction programs.
- ▶ **Catherine LaRoque**, an undergraduate at Mount Holyoke College majoring in Political Science and Spanish, is a summer intern. She is assisting with the management and execution of country programs in Latin America.
- ▶ **William Schlossberg**, a summer intern from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is majoring in History with a focus on the United States. This summer, he compiled and drafted articles for this edition of *Safe Passage*, wrote media notes, and conducted research on worldwide demining contributions.
- ▶ **Emma Smith** is the new Frasure-Kreuzel-Drew Humanitarian Demining Fellow. She graduated from James Madison University in May 2009 with a major in Communication Studies focusing on Conflict Analysis and Intervention. She will be serving as an assistant program manager for Afghanistan, Sudan, and Sri Lanka.
- ▶ **Brandon Sternquist** arrived in May as a participant in the Student Temporary Employment Program. He is a graduate student in International Security and Humanitarian Assistance at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies. At PM/WRA, his primary responsibilities are Program Support and Resource Management.

Kudos to the Marshall Legacy Institute and Spirit of Soccer

by William Schlossberg, PM/WRA

Two members of the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement's (PM/WRA) Public-Private Partnership Program, the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) and Spirit of Soccer, have recently won prestigious awards from organizations representing the communities they serve.

The Marshall Legacy Institute, whose projects include the Mine Detection Dog Partnership Program and Children Against Mines Program (CHAMPS), received the Khalil Gibran Award for Institutional Excellence from the Arab American Institute Foundation (AAIF) at a gala event in Washington, DC, on April 24. The AAIF annually honors individuals and organizations that address some of the world's most pressing humanitarian problems. Anthony Lake, MLI's chairman, accepted the award along with Utsi, one of MLI's mine-detecting dogs. MLI has been a PM/WRA partner since 2000. It has provided teams of mine-detecting dogs to help Lebanon, among other countries. For more information about MLI, visit <http://www.marshall-legacy.org/>.

Spirit of Soccer, which uses soccer to educate children about the dangers of landmines and explosive remnants of war in affected countries, was awarded the "Most Courageous Use of Sport" Award for the Beyond Sport Awards 2009. Beyond Sport recognized Spirit of Soccer for displaying "extraordinary acts of courage in delivering social change through sport." Started over a decade ago in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Spirit of Soccer currently manages two soccer coaching and Mine Risk Education projects in Cambodia and Iraq. At the Beyond Sport Awards Summit in July, Spirit of Soccer's founder and chief executive, Scotty Lee, received a £10,000 (approximately \$16,000) award, as well as an extensive support package for the growth and development of Spirit of Soccer. Spirit of Soccer has been a PM/WRA partner since 2001. For more information about Spirit of Soccer, visit <http://www.spiritofsoccer.net/>.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEYOND SPORT

Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, one of Britain's top Paralympians, and Scotty Lee, Founder and CEO of Spirit of Soccer, at the Beyond Sport Awards in July.

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